CRITICAL NOTICE

The Presocratics in Context

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I

"This book is intended to be the starting-point from which new work on the Presocratics will derive impetus and inspiration" (p.vii). It "stands . . . as the beginning of a new programme of reading and interpretation of the Presocratics" (p.13). It pretends "to justify a new method of approach to the reading of the Presocratics" (p.183).[1]

Audacious claims, iconoclastic and ambitious. The title is itself something of a boast. The argument is uncompromising. There is a swashbuckling vigour of thought, and a willingness – an eagerness – to address folly by its proper name.

And is there really room for a new approach to the Presocratics? Can we really set about rethinking early Greek philosophy? "Humph", the sceptical reader will mutter, "such pretensions can only puff themselves into falsehoods – or else deflate into familiar truths".

Not so, not so. The boast is firmly grounded, the audacity a proper pride. This is – to be blunt – the best book on the Presocratics I have seen for years. I am minded to rank it alongside Reinhardt's *Parmenides* – and is there higher praise? Dr Osborne says some new things. She says some true things. She says some interesting things. She says some important things.

And therefore for most of this review I shall growl and grumble.[2]

[1] Catherine Osborne, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy: Hippolytus of Rome and the Presocratics*. Duckworth, London, 1987. Pp.viii + 382. £ 35.

[2] And why not take a pot-shot at the publisher? I have noticed a few misprints (e.g. p.9 l.18: for "we are" read "are we"; p.235 l.20: for "rest" read "root"; p.283 12 up: for "illegitimate" read "legitimate"). But the Greek is vile. It comes in different forms: by xerography from old texts, from 'camera ready' typescript, in transliteration, and (occasionally) set anew. And yet with modern machinery Greek is as simple to set as English.

II

There is an introductory chapter expounding the new methodology, and preferring it to the traditional approach. The new method is to be tested on Hippolytus' account of the Presocratics. The procedures and habits of Hippolytus are first examined in the controllable cases of Aristotle and Simon Magus. Then, at the heart of the book, come detailed analyses of Hippolytus' discussions of the philosophies of Empedocles and Heraclitus. Substantial appendixes deal with Book I of the *Refutatio*, and with the *Apophasis Megale* of Simon, and offer an English translation of *Refutatio* IV-X opposite a reprint of Wendland's Greek text.[3]

I shall pass some comments first on the new methodology, then on Dr Osborne's appreciation of Hippolytus, and finally on her interpretation of Heraclitus. Many of her most interesting and challenging pages will perforce be passed by.

III

The approach to the Presocratics which Dr Osborne regards as traditional consists essentially in this injunction: Distinguish as carefully as you can the *ipsissima verba* of the Presocratics (the fragments *sensu stricto*); base your interpretation primarily upon them; call upon the other texts only when the fragments do not suffice – and then with the greatest caution.

The new approach offers a new injunction: Read the 'fragments' if you will, but read them *in context*; attend to the interpretations of those ancient authors who quote the Presocratics; found your own interpretation on their interpretations.

The orthodox say: Free the fragments from their false contexts. The heretic says: Take the whole texts – fragments and contexts and all.

I discern three arguments against the traditional method.

(1) If we focus on the fragments, we blinker ourselves. For the selection of those fragments which survive was determined by "the same interested and biassed readings as the notorious doxography" (p.3); it is a foolish optimism to believe, with Barnes, that "these fragments preserve the most

[3] A pity that she could not use the new text by Miroslav Marcovich: *Hippolytus: Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* [Patristische Texte und Studien 25] (Berlin, 1986). This edition, to which all students of the Presocratics must henceforth refer, marks a notable advance. (Wendland's text, published posthumously, was the work of a dying man: for a sharp judgement on it see Marcovich, p.7.)

important and most interesting of their philosophical doctrines" – "it is more often the case that the selection of fragments is governed by curious and perverse personal preoccupations on the part of the doxographers" (p.7).[4] – No doubt Barnes was foolishly optimistic. Nonetheless, the traditionalists have a sound defence. They may hold, first, that interest and bias may be recognized and trumpeted. ('Of Parmenides' Way of Opinion we know little – for the ancient authors were more interested in the Way of Truth. Hence I cannot pretend to offer you a rounded account of Parmenides' thought.') The traditionalists are not obliged by their method to be optimists. And secondly, *any* view of the Presocratics is bound to be limited in this very way. Telepathy apart, we know the Presocratics only through later authors. We shall never remove the blinkers, do what we will.

(2) We cannot tell whether we are faced by *ipsissima verba* or not: the modish search for 'fragments' presupposes a modern concern for scholarly quotation which was foreign to ancient writers (see p. 4).

There are genuine difficulties here, which scholars often overlook. The first question the traditionalists need to ask of a text is this: Does the author *purport to quote* here? And sometimes the answer must be: Who knows? But Dr Osborne greatly exaggerates the difficulties. I may be allowed a few lines on the matter.

She illustrates her claim by adducing the four texts assembled by Diels-Kranz under Heraclitus B36 and B76. "Are these one fragment", she asks, "two fragments, or four fragments?" (p.5). The answer is plain: They are *no* fragments.[5] We can tell from these texts that their authors are not purporting to quote: we have no reason to think that we are here dealing with fragments; and a traditionalist will have no difficulty in discerning this – or in discarding the texts from his primary evidence. (Which is not to say that all traditionalists *have* discarded them.)

She justifies her claim by asserting that whereas modern editions can use inverted commas to mark off quotations, "such devices were not available

[4] On p.2 Dr Osborne introduces her view by criticising certain scholars who have made deprecatory noises about the *doxography*; and she sometimes speaks as though her own approach restored status to the *doxographers*. This is misleading: Hippolytus – outside Book I – is not being doxographical, in the normal sense of the word; and most ancient authors who preserve Presocratic fragments do not do so in the course of a doxographical exercise. Dr Osborne does not argue that we should take doxographical reports seriously (I mean, that is not the thesis she defends in her book): she argues that we should take seriously the *interpretative context* in which any fragment is quoted – and these contexts will rarely be doxographical.

[5] As she herself states a little later: "in cases such as this we simply do not have the philosopher's 'own words' " (p.7).

to the writers who actually quoted them" (p.4). But the ancients had and used unambiguous devices for marking off quotations. Galen frequently quotes – and frequently with polemical intent. In his attack on Archigenes in *diff puls* II, for example, he introduces *verbatim* citations by writing: κατὰ λέξιν ὠδί πως[6] γεγραμμένην (VIII 591K); ταύτην τὴν λέξιν (ibid); τὴν λέξιν (592); ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς λέξεως ἐχούσης ὧδε (602); ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ λέξει (625); ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ῥήσει (626); ἐπὶ τῇ τελευτῇ τοῦ λόγου (627); παραγράφωμεν ῥήσεις (ibid); μία ῥῆσις (628); φησιν . . . αὐτῇ λέξει (640); παραγράψαι τὴν ῥῆσιν αὐτήν (ibid). These examples are all plain. They can be multiplied *ad nauseam* – and not only from Galen. The ancients were as well equipped, typographically, as we are when it comes to quotations.

(Dr Osborne knows this. Indeed, it matters to her at more than one point. In Hippolytus she is sometimes concerned to recognize purported quotations. She holds that the use of φησί with *direct* speech "clearly suggests quotation" (p.17).[7])

She has a supplementary argument: we should not suppose that the ancients "were concerned to quote with the accuracy expected today" (p.4); "the idea that these will be accurate 'quotations' in the modern sense is anachronistic" (p.20). But the ancients certainly could, and certainly sometimes did, concern themselves with accurate quotation: Galen, who delighted in pedantry, shows again and again that he is concerned to quote with literal fidelity; the Greek commentatorial tradition frequently displays a sensitivity to precise quotation (witness their textual comments). Dr Osborne ignores or misprises ancient scholarship.[8] I do not claim that all ancients were always scrupulously precise in their quotations – we know that such a claim would be false. (Nor are the moderns such sticklers for accuracy as Dr Osborne pretends.) But they could – and sometimes did – quote with all the accuracy a modern scholar might demand.[9]

[6] ὠδί πως (or ὧδε πως) is commonly used for *verbatim* citation: e.g. *diff puls* VIII 628K; *PHP* V 516K (bis), 580, 684 (bis), 801; Hippolytus, VII xxix 23; IX ix 2, x 2 (cf. οὕτω πως: VIII xii 1). Dr Osborne is wrong when she says of Clement that "his citation of Heraclitus may be from memory since he introduces it vaguely ('something like this' – *hode pos*)" (p.6). The phrase is a conventional mark of exactitude, not of vagueness.

[7] Cf. pp.56 n.44, 59, 171 n.109. But I do not think she is right – in Hippolytus' account of Heraclitus see IX x 2 [345.8M], where φησί + *oratio recta* marks a paraphrase. We possess more subtle linguistic tests than this.

[8] For a nice illustration see E. Puglia, 'La filologia degli Epicurei', *Cron Erc* 12, 1982, 19-34.

[9] I have referred exclusively to *prose* citations. Where an author cites a versifier, it is – of course – *always* evident that he purports to quote.

(3) "Since the 'fragments' themselves represent the reading of those who preserved them, the use of such material as if it were unbiassed cannot be sound. It is thus the traditional use of the 'fragments' without their accompanying context which represents an uncritical approach based on potentially misleading evidence" (p.9). – This is true and not trifling: if you snip a fragment out of its context, then you will overlook the fact that the quoting author – from bias or indolence – may have changed or twisted the text to suit his own ends. Indeed, if we want to establish the *text* of a fragment, then we need the context; for the context may, in effect, indicate places where the quoted text is or might be in error. (Either an error of the quoting author or an error of a scribe who was influenced by the surrounding context.)

But although this is true, and although the truth has been neglected – to their shame – by some traditionalists, it is a truth easily accommodated within the traditionalist position. And most good traditionalists have so accommodated it.

There is thus less against the traditional method than Dr Osborne imagines. What is to be said in favour of the new method? The fundament and bottom of the matter is this: the ancients knew far more of the Presocratic texts than we do. "In most cases the ancient writer was selecting from a much more extensive body of material than he presents to us, and his reading is likely to have been influenced by the context in which the text he quotes occurred" (p.8). "Whereas our independent reading could not be based on more of the text than we now possess, Hippolytus' reading can claim that authority" (p.185).

There is evident and important truth in these remarks. Dr Osborne draws a moral and adopts a hermeneutical stance. The moral is this: we cannot possibly improve upon the ancient interpretations. Thus "when it comes to the Presocratics scholars have no justification for asserting that what Hippolytus saw in the text was not there or was incorrect as a reading of that text. . . . No subsequent reading based on the words <the ancient interpreters> quote can have greater validity than their own readings" (pp.22-23). This is surely false. Sometimes, at least, we do have good reason for rejecting an ancient interpretation. First, even if we do not possess more of, say, Heraclitus than Hippolytus *possessed*, we do possess more than Hippolytus *quotes*; and this additional material may allow us to correct his interpretation. (In principle, we can correct Hippolytus' interpretation of Heraclitus in exactly the same way as we can correct his interpretation of Aristotle: we may not possess more Aristotle than Hippolytus possessed,[10] but we possess more than he quotes – and hence we can correct him.)

[10] But see below.

Secondly, we can often spot anachronisms and biasses of one sort or another. If the Neoplatonists interpret Heraclitus by way of their own distinction between a world of perception and a world of intellection, we can properly reject their exegesis and for obvious reasons. More tritely, we can often establish that an ancient interpretation misreads – by accident or design – some particular word or phrase in a Presocratic text. No doubt the ancients were better placed than we are. It does not follow that we can never correct or surpass them. And in point of fact we often can.

The hermeneutical stance has it that "the aim is not a single conclusive reading but an exploration of the range of meanings brought out by the creative use of the text" (p.10). "Every different interpretative standpoint will produce different insights, and this justifies the exploration of each ancient interpretation *as a legitimate reading of the text*" (pp.11-12, my italics). Thus, in the end, "Hippolytus' interpretation has served as a basis for an exploration in the thought of Heraclitus and Empedocles. It has not been set forth as the truth" (p.186). And in general, "there is no way that one can cut through the layers to some 'objective truth' about the meaning of the 'fragments' " (p.22). Rather, the ancient interpretations should be taken simply as "the jumping-off point for our own explorations of possible readings". We are explorers, mapping out readings. We are trappers, setting gins for creative insights. And the truth? The correct interpretation? How naive – how very Anglo-Saxon – to think that there is any such beast.

I think all this is wrong, and perniciously wrong. So, really, does Dr Osborne. She is perfectly happy to say of Hippolytus that "the final picture which he succeeds in conveying is highly tendentious and unorthodox [*anglice*, false] as an interpretation of Aristotle" (p.62).[11] I do not believe that Dr Osborne wants to 'explore' *possible* readings. Certainly, I do not. I want to find out what on earth the stuff really means. I want to discover the truth – or at least to uncover some falsehoods. If that were a hopeless venture, then I should give up the game and turn to tapestry-making.

The hermeneutic stance is to be exploded. And in any case, the new method can do very well without it. But the method requires a moral, and I have argued that the moral which Dr Osborne draws is false. Yet I suspect that it was offered more as a piece of bravado than as a credo; for elsewhere Dr Osborne is content with something more modest. Thus she says of Hippolytus' reading of Heraclitus that it is "incomplete so far as our total

[11] Yet on p.63 Hippolytus' account is also said to be "usually a justifiable reading of the text", and "a strongly coloured but productive interpretation". Justifiable – how? Productive – of what?

knowledge of Heraclitus goes, but it is *the first stage* in the process of reading the text" (p.143, my italics). We might agree that the study of Hippolytus' account is "the first stage" – or at any rate, one possible first stage – in the interpretation of Heraclitus. But should we admit, in general, that the ancient interpretations must be "the jumping-off point for our own explorations . . . of the Presocratics" (p.10)? Surely not. There are good ancient interpretations, and there are bad ones. If we do decide to start from some ancient interpretation, then we must choose which one to start from. No-one, for example, would seriously propose that the right starting-point for a study of Parmenides is the Neoplatonic interpretation provided by Simplicius. (Dr Osborne herself implicitly rejects the idea of using the Neoplatonic interpretation of Empedocles: pp. 109-111.)

What, then, remains of Dr Osborne's thesis and of the new approach to the Presocratics? This: in the case of *some* of the Presocratics (and notably of Heraclitus), we shall not achieve any serious understanding if we extract what we take to be *ipsissima verba* and throw away everything else. Rather, we must print the fragments in the contexts in which they are quoted – for these contexts may provide evidence without which the fragments themselves cannot be understood. And in addition, we should be prepared to study the interpretations offered by the ancient authors who cite the fragments – for they may well be relying on evidence no longer available to us.

Put thus, Dr Osborne's thesis is true.

Perhaps it is *obviously* true? Well, I think it *is* obviously true. (Most important truths are.) But it is a truth which almost all students of Heraclitus have disregarded: it is, for example, ignored by Kahn and by Robinson in their editions of Heraclitus – and as a result those editions are fundamentally flawed.[12] More generally, it is a truth disregarded by that vast multitude of scholars who study the Presocratics by way of the fragments printed in Diels-Kranz.

IV

Dr Osborne says that "the justification lies in the results" (p.11). But the method is self-justifying. She imagines a critic to say: "there is nothing in these readings which could not have been derived from an imaginative

[12] See my reviews of C.H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, in *Mind* 1982, and of T.M. Robinson, *Heraclitus – the Fragments*, in *Apeiron* 1988. In my *Early Greek Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, 1987) I have presented the fragments in their original context. My decision to do so was influenced by Dr Osborne's doctoral thesis, on which her book is based.

reading of the context-free fragments" (p.185). Even were the critic right, Dr Osborne's method would still be the correct method. Nonetheless, we want results. And to these I now turn.

Marcovich describes Hippolytus as "an unscrupulous and reckless plagiarist" (op.cit., p.36). He was a copyist, and a stupid copyist: "sometimes he would copy his source so hastily or mechanically that he would not notice even a major error in it . . ., or he would misunderstand his source and then write down a nonsense" (p.50). Dr Osborne demurs. She allows that Hippolytus *sometimes* copies, and that he is *sometimes* pretty careless in his copying.[13] But she holds that in the passages which matter – in the passages where Hippolytus is presenting the pagan philosophies which prefigure the Christian heresies – "his handling of the material is sensitive rather than mindless and original rather than second-hand" (p.14).

The claim is tested on two cases in which we have a control, namely on Hippolytus' accounts of Simon Magus and of Aristotle. I do not know what to make of the curious account of Simon Magus. On the story of Apsethos, Dr Osborne says that "the composition as it stands represents Hippolytus' own creation" (p.73); but she also notes that "it is possible that he has simply derived the whole story from another anti-heretical context now lost" (p.73 n.4). The other main part of the account, the story of Helen, is generally supposed to derive from Irenaeus – "the adherence is so close that Hippolytus is used to provide the otherwise lost Greek text of Irenaeus" (p.73). Even if Dr Osborne is right in suggesting that Hippolytus has used his own genius in refashioning the material he took from Irenaeus, we shall still see him as essentially a copyist.

And in any case, the account of Simon is not obviously pertinent to Dr Osborne's project. It is a piece of biography (or rather, of anecdotage), not of philosophy. Even if Hippolytus here proves himself an independent operator (in the etiolated sense which Dr Osborne postulates), we may not infer that he is also an independent – and an intelligent – operator in philosophical matters.

Aristotle is a better test. Dr Osborne offers a sequence of arguments to show that in VII xv-xix Hippolytus tackles the Peripatetic philosophy in a scholarly and independent manner. I shall comment on a few of her more contentious points.

(1) Aristotle is the pagan parallel to Basilides; and since the parallelism is Hippolytus' own invention, the probability is that he has himself

[13] See pp.14 n.24, 21-22, on the passages in which Hippolytus appears to be (mis)copying Sextus Empiricus.

deliberately shaped the Aristotelian material (p.36). This may seem plausible enough. But Marcovich infers the opposite conclusion from the same data: he infers that Hippolytus gets his knowledge of Aristotle "from a Basilidean reinterpretation of Aristotle" (p.38). This fits with Marcovich's general estimate of Hippolytus' scholarly capacities. Hippolytus, "in his eagerness to discover 'proof' of the Gnostics being mere plagiarists of Greek philosophers, often finds such a 'proof' not very far: *in the same Gnostic scriptures he is quoting*. Gnostic exegeses quote Greek poets and philosophers in order to *reinterpret* them and present them as their witnesses. In his turn, Hippolytus copies the passages of the Gnostic exegeses dealing with the Greek philosophers, presents them as his own discovery, and uses them as 'proof' of the Gnostics plagiarizing Greek philosophy. *A plagiarist accuses a quoting writer of plagiarizing*" (p.37, original italics). Marcovich's particular thesis, that Hippolytus took his Aristotle from Basilides, relies on little direct evidence. But the evidence for Marcovich's general thesis is considerable and persuasive – and the particular thesis then derives some warrant from the general.[14]

(2) Hippolytus refers to a "debate" over the interpretation of Aristotle's views on god and the soul, but he does not go into the matter. Hence he is relying on something more than "a basic handbook" (p.39, cf. pp. 51, 64).[15] The "hence" is questionable; and the premiss of the argument is dubious. For I think that Dr Osborne may have misunderstood the text. Hippolytus says that to explain Aristotle's definition of the soul λόγων <πάνυ πολλῶν> δεῖται καὶ μεγάλης ζητήσεως, and that Aristotle's account of God is even harder to understand καὶ <ἐν> μακροτέρῳ λόγῳ θεωροῦντι (VII xix 6). The λόγοι here are interpreted by Dr Osborne as discussions or debates about Aristotle; but I suspect that they are not exegetical debates, whether historical or hypothetical: rather, the λόγοι are Aristotle's own works – Hippolytus is referring to the three books of the *de Anima* (VII xix 5) and to the "even longer account" in the *Metaphysics*.[16]

[14] Hippolytus' general strategy against the heretics, which Dr Osborne lucidly analyses (pp.15-17), loses its force if Marcovich is right. Hippolytus thinks it tells *against* a given 'heresy' that it shares doctrines with the pagans. But the heretics themselves were keen to urge that their doctrines had been anticipated or adumbrated by the ancients. (E.g. the Peratai, V xvi 4: οὐ μόνον δὲ τοῦτο, φησίν, οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ οἱ σοφώτατοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ὧν ἐστι καὶ Ἡράκλειτος εἷς, λέγων . . .).

[15] Dr Osborne notes various parallels between Hippolytus' discussion of Aristotle and Sextus' discussions of similar topics (pp.36-40); and she suggests that "these arguments may be Hippolytus' own, devised under the influence of his knowledge of Scepticism, or may be more or less closely based on arguments he had read or heard elsewhere" (p.40). Perhaps on arguments he had read in a Basilidean writing . . .?

(3) Hippolytus' arguments about οὐσία are taken from *Cat* and *Met* (p.44).[17] Again, Dr Osborne misreads the text.[18] She sees parallels where I see only the vaguest of similarities (p.46). She indulges in some special pleading (p.48).

(4) Hippolytus explicitly refers to *Cat* (p.51), which he actually quotes. Alas, such references prove nothing: it is a familiar habit of ancient – and modern – scholars that they refer to works which they have never even seen.

(5) He refers to Aristotle in his account of the views of Basilides. But why should this make it "reasonable to suggest that Hippolytus shows some immediate knowledge of Aristotle's works" (p.51)?

And against Dr Osborne's thesis? First, Hippolytus purports to present τὰ 'Αριστοτέλει δοκοῦντα (VII xiv), which – in the context – should mean "Aristotle's philosophy".[19] But no-one who was acquainted with Aristotle's works could possibly imagine that Hippolytus' paragraphs represented the whole of Peripatetic thought. More generally, the nature of the material – partial, inaccurate, facile, jejune – might seem to exclude any near acquaintance with Aristotle's own texts. (Yet an objection rears: by the same token one might argue that Heidegger had never read a word of Greek philosophy . . . Well then, the nature of the material shows this: either Hippolytus had never read Aristotle, or else he read him with no scholarly understanding.) Again, Dr Osborne does not consider the various intermediate sources for Peripatetic philosophy, or the likelihood of their use by Hippolytus. She does not go in for *Quellenforschung* of the sort suggested by Wendland's critical apparatus or by Marcovich's introductory comments. I confess that it seems to me overwhelmingly unlikely that Hippolytus had read or used Aristotle, and virtually certain that he drew his knowledge of the Peripatos from some late source or other. But this requires further investigation.

[16] λόγος occurs nine times in VII xix 4-8, where Hippolytus is describing Aristotle's *oeuvre*: all nine occurrences refer to *Aristotle*'s writings.

[17] They "imply a detailed knowledge of material from" *Cat, Met* Z, *Phys* A and/or *Met* Λ. This is fanciful: the arguments are incompatible with any serious reading of these texts.

[18] She says that Hippolytus takes as a premise the thesis that "the *genus* is *oude hen*, not a single thing". But in fact Hippolytus starts from the claim that the *genus* ζῷον is ΤΟΥΤΩΝ οὐδὲ ἕν, "no one *of these things*", i.e. neither man nor horse nor cow etc (VII xix 1; cf. xvi 1, 2); and that has nothing to do with Aristotle's notions about the unity of substances.

[19] He also purports to give ἡ ὅλη τοῦ Περιπάτου θεωρία (VII xv 2); but this probably means "the whole Peripatetic theory <of οὐσία>" rather than "the entire philosophy of the Peripatos" (as Dr Osborne translates it).

Dr Osborne concludes her discussion of Hippolytus' account of Aristotle by ascribing to him "a close and intelligent reading of Aristotle's text" (p.65). Had we lost Aristotle's works, she suggests, and were we obliged to rely on Hippolytus, then we should be foolish to restrict our attention to the 'fragments' which he quotes – rather, we should look to Hippolytus' interpretation of the texts he knew (cf. p.61).[20] The interpretation is surely interesting – for the light it may shed on Hippolytus and on the history of Aristotelianism (cf. p.66). But in itself the interpretation is perfectly ludicrous as an account of Aristotle's views. Had Aristotle not survived, we should welcome the small fragments which Hippolytus preserves; and we should print the Hippolytan context in which they are embedded. But as for Hippolytus' version of Aristotle's philosophy, we should toss it, with a light laugh, into the nearest waste-paper basket.

In sum, I cannot agree with Dr Osborne's warm assessment of Hippolytus. Marcovich, I fear, is nearer the truth. Despite this, I think that Dr Osborne's pages on Hippolytus contain matter of the greatest value: she reads Hippolytus' *Refutatio* as a text, and not simply as a matrix for fragments; she is concerned to understand and to explain the general structure of Hippolytus' attack on the heresies; and on numerous particular points she is illuminating.[21]

V

Heraclitus is compared to Noetus: in order to understand what Hippolytus wishes to say about Heraclitus, we must appreciate his attitude to Noetus. Dr Osborne's remarks on this subject (pp.134-142) are brimming with good sense and sound judgement.

[20] The interpretation is "justifiable" and "productive" (p.63) and "well-supported" (p.65), and it "merits attention" (p.66). On the other hand, it is "highly tendentious and unorthodox" (p.62).

[21] In a few places she seems to me to have misunderstood the text. I gather here one or two miscellaneous examples. VI xxvii 4: for "rear a phoenix" read "plant a date-palm". VII xxvii 5: for "the great seed" read "the great heap". VII xxx 1: for "Up till now Marcion thought he had succeeded in stealing from Empedocles unnoticed and in adapting the structure of his entire heresy to the gospel accounts from Sicily in the very same words" read "He pillaged Empedocles and thought that up to now no-one had noticed that he had transferred the structure, words and all, of the whole of Empedocles' philosophy from Sicily to the gospel accounts". IX vii 1: for "Zephyrinus was, by custom, running the church" read "Zephyrinus . . . thought he was running the church". IX viii 1: for "do not know . . . when they chance upon them" read "seem not to know" (better, however, accept Marcovich's plausible emendation and read "have not come across them, and do not know").

As for Hippolytus' account of Heraclitus, she finds a clear plan to the text: Hippolytus first gives a programmatic summary of Heraclitus' views ("The all is divisible and indivisible, created and uncreated, . . .": IX ix 1), and then "proceeds to give a detailed account of the material on which he based" this summary claim (p.153). Dr Osborne makes Hippolytus neater and more coherent than he is: even if her analysis of the section is correct (p.145 n.35), the detailed account does not correspond to the programme. Of course, the text is corrupt, and transpositions may well be required. Even so, of two things one: either the text is more horribly mangled than even Marcovich thinks, or else Hippolytus made a fist of the thing.

A few comments on individual fragments:

– B1: Hippolytus introduces the fragment by saying ὅτι δὲ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀεὶ τὸ πᾶν . . . οὕτως λέγει (IX ix 3). Hence (so Dr Osborne infers) he found in the Heraclitean phrase τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεί . . . a reference to 'the all'. Hence we must have taken τοῦδε to refer to 'the all'. Hence his text of Heraclitus must have contained a sentence *before* τοῦδε which made this reference clear. Perhaps his text of Heraclitus began: <ἓν τὸ ξυνόν>. τοῦ δὲ λόγου κτλ (pp.154-155).

If Dr Osborne is right, then from the very start of Heraclitus' work, the new method enriches our knowledge and understanding. But is Dr Osborne right? She must suppose that Hippolytus chose to omit the crucial part of his proof-text. An odd procedure. (And she must also suppose that no other ancient author happened to preserve this indispensable first sentence.) I am sceptical. I should guess that Hippolytus based his statement that 'the all is λόγος' on a later phrase in the fragment: γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε . . .

– B54 (the hidden harmony): Hippolytus' text at IX ix 5 is certainly corrupt. Dr Osborne proposes some changes which, she says, produce "a clear argument" for Hippolytus (p.161). On her reconstruction, the train of thought is this:

(1) The all is invisible [see B51]
  (2) and its non-visible aspect is superior [see B54]
(3) The all is visible [see B53]
  (4) and its visible aspect is superior
(5) < . . . > [see B56].

I do not find this outstandingly neat: why interweave (2) and (4) among (1) and (3)? Why is (4) not supported by any citation? What was the content of (5) such that B56 (Homer and the lice) supported it? And the "clear argument" is in any case patched together by means of extensive, and textually implausible, surgery.

Marcovich's text gives the following train of thought:

(1) <(?) The all is divisible and indivisible> [see B51]

(2) The all is invisible [see B54]

(3) The all is visible [see B55 – and also B56]

This train of thought is as clear as Dr Osborne's, and it requires much less in the way of emendation. It is not wholly satisfactory: B54 and B55 refer to the superiority of the invisible over the visible and *vice versa*, and so do not obviously support claims (2) and (3); nor does B56 seem to offer evidence for (3). Maybe Hippolytus stretched the texts he quoted. But I incline to think that we must rest content with a *non liquet*: I doubt if we can reconstruct Hippolytus' text at this point. Nevertheless, it is, I think, plain that only the most daring of interventions could give Hippolytus the semblance of a "clear argument".

– B56: "What the riddle demonstrates is that the seen and the unseen . . . are actually all the same *and equally worthless*" (p.163, my italics).[22] In fragments B56-61 Dr Osborne sees, on the basis of the Hippolytan context, a concern to "deny the traditional distinctions of value" (p.164), to "undermine the conventional distinctions of morality" (p.168). I do not think that the Hippolytan context requires – or even suggests – this interpretation. Dr Osborne strains the sense of the Greek. Certainly, Hippolytus holds that, according to Heraclitus, "good and bad are the same" (IX x 3 – cf.2). For this he cites B58 (the tormenting doctors). Dr Osborne says that "similar implications of value can be identified in the other opposites mentioned in this passage" (p.164). Well, they *can* be – but they need not be, and nothing in the text indicates that they should be. She claims that "Hippolytus' introductory comment makes explicit the association with good and evil" of B57 (p.164). The introductory comment is this: "That is why[23] Heraclitus says that neither light and darkness, nor evil and good, are different but one and the same" (IX x 2). I cannot see that this implies a moral interpretation for light and darkness. The emphasis is on the unity of opposites, not on the rejection of values.

[22] Dr Osborne offers a fantastical interpretation of B56 (pp.162-163). Moreover, she finds that "there is an initial impression that the second part of the quotation does not belong with the first . . . there remains the possibility that the two parts were unconnected in their original context in Heraclitus" (pp.162 n.87). But the two parts cannot be severed – neither makes any sense isolated from the other. And the message of the fragment seems fairly simple: Men miss the obvious – just as Homer missed the obvious when he couldn't understand the little riddle of the lice.

[23] τοιγαροῦν: Dr Osborne's "for" inverts the order of the argument.

– B57 (Hesiod on day and night):[24] "Heraclitus' point is that it is impossible that day and night are two things, since it is impossible to envisage both together. . . . it is in virtue of their being one and the same that night and day are alternatives since this alone explains the logical impossibility of their occurring as two together" (pp.166-167). This reads a lot into B57. No doubt we must read something into B57 if we are to give it any sense. But here Dr Osborne cannot call on Hippolytus to support her reading – and she ascribes to Heraclitus a line of thought which is at once recherché and silly.
– B59 (the κοχλίας): "Hippolytus' introduction, and his gloss on the precise instrument involved, both suggest a reading which identifies the straight and crooked paths as a reference to 'straight' and 'crooked' uses of the same machine in the fulling industry and in torture" (p.168). There is no evidence that one and the same machine had these two functions in antiquity. (The word κοχλίας may indeed designate an instrument of torture – but that is not the same point.) Hippolytus' introduction is short: "Straight and crooked, he says, are <one and> the same" (IX x 4). This does not suggest two *uses* of a machine, nor does it suggest anything to do with torture. Hippolytus' gloss is this: "The turning of the instrument called κοχλίας in the fullery is straight and crooked – for it goes upwards and in a circle at the same time" (ibid). This gloss makes it quite evident that Hippolytus is thinking not of *two* machines and *two* functions but of *one* machine and *one* function – a cylinder (I suppose) which revolves about its own axis while simultaneously rising vertically in a straight line. Dr Osborne here ignores or misreads the plain sense of Hippolytus' text. And ironically this is one of those texts where her new method is of some considerable importance. For without the Hippolytan context we could not even reconstruct Heraclitus' text, let alone understand its reference.
– B66 (the fire next time):[25] Hippolytus takes this text to refer to "universal judgement and consummation by fire"; but "it is quite possible that the words were used in a very different context, with reference to the role of fire in perception: 'Fire will attend to all things in turn, distinguish them and comprehend' " (p.171). Possible, at a pinch.[26] But how can Dr Osborne

[24] At IX x 2 read <οὐκ>, with all editors. Dr Osborne's defence of the MS text (p.164 n.92) will not wash.

[25] Dr Osborne rejects Fraenkel's palmary transposition in IX x 7 (accepted by Marcovich), but she still refers to the "curious misplacement" of B66 in Hippolytus' text (pp.170 n.106 and 171 n.107).

[26] I do not think that the words ἐπελθεῖν and καταλαμβάνειν could have been used in these senses *by Heraclitus*: see LSJ s.vv. (but note that at Hesiod, frag 278 M-W, ἐπελθέμεν is a false reading).

entertain the possibility? Her new method should sharply dismiss such 'modern' suggestions: we have the plain interpretation of Hippolytus; we have no reason to reject it; so let us accept it. Here – and rumly – Dr Osborne seems to defy her own precepts.

– B63 (the 'resurrection' fragment): Dr Osborne's discussion of this text is the most elaborate application of the new method. She thinks that the Hippolytan context will help us to produce a correct text of these puzzling words; and, further, that the Hippolytan interpretation will help us to understand what Heraclitus originally meant. As for the text, we should read ἐγέρσει ζῶντων (ἐγερτιζόντων MS, ἐγερτὶ ζῶντων Bernays, edd) (pp.176-177). The sense is this:

> The *logos* is here among them but foolish men rise in hostility against it and set themselves as guards against an awakening of the living and the dead (p.178).

We ordinary chaps resist the truth; what's more, we try to stop other chaps from waking up to it. (Do we try to stop *the dead* too? Well, the living "are like the dead or the sleeping in their ignorance" (p.178).) If this is right, it is a major contribution to Heraclitean scholarship – and a bright testimony to the powers of the new method.

Hippolytus introduces the fragment thus: "He actually refers to a resurrection (ἀνάστασις) of this visible flesh in which we were born, and he knows that god is the cause of this resurrection, thus: . . ." (IX x 6). Dr Osborne holds that Hippolytus must be referring specifically to the resurrection of Christ (p.174). Hence behind the corrupt ἐγερτιζόντων we should expect to find a reference to Christ's resurrection, and ἔγερσις is the word to welcome – for ἐγείρω is often used in connection with the raising of Christ (p.176).[27] Hence *Hippolytus* understood the fragment as follows:

> When god was here in this world men rose up against him and set themselves as guards against him who was the awakening of the living and the dead (p.177).

To get the original Heraclitean sense from this, we need only replace Christ by the λόγος, and read ἔγερσις in an abstract rather than a personified sense. Hey presto.

There are some queer things here. First, Hippolytus is not referring to the resurrection of Christ but to the general resurrection. Dr Osborne allows that the *first* reference to ἀνάστασις in IX x 6 must be to the general resurrection, but she holds that the *second* reference applies to Christ

[27] For ἔγερσις of Christ's resurrection see Mt 27.53; but the normal word in the NT is ἀνάστασις.

(p.174). But the second reference picks up the first (ΤΑΥΤΗΣ τῆς ἀνα - στάσεως) and therefore must also indicate the general resurrection. But secondly, Dr Osborne's own interpretation of B63 does not in fact contain any reference to the resurrection of Christ: the ἔγερσις in her text is Christ himself ("I am the resurrection . . .")[28], it is not the resurrection of Christ. Dr Osborne's false understanding of Hippolytus' ἀνάστασις is thus irrelevant to her interpretation of B63.

Thirdly, if we ask where in B63 Hippolytus saw a reference to the resurrection, then the answer is plain: he saw it in the word ἐπανίστασθαι. It is true that ἔγερσις is also used for "resurrection", but Hippolytus' text leaves no doubt that his ἀνάστασις prefigures Heraclitus' ἐπανίστασθαι. To translate the verb by "rise against" is, in this context, perverse. And thus Dr Osborne's interpretation collapses.[29]

– B67 (God is night and day): at IX x 8 Hippolytus writes:

> ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῷ κεφαλαίῳ πάντα ὁμοῦ τὸν ἴδιον νοῦν ἐξέθετο, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸν τῆς Νοητοῦ αἱρέσεως <ὄν> δι' ὀλίγων ἐπέδειξα οὐκ ὄντα Χριστοῦ ἀλλὰ Ἡρακλείτου μαθητήν. (Text from Marcovich)

Scholars have worried about the 'chapter' to which Hippolytus apparently refers.[30] According to Dr Osborne, "in this chapter" refers not to any chapter of *Heraclitus*, but to "the summary which Hippolytus has just given of Heraclitus' doctrines" (p.179). How can that be? Well, first, we must recognize that the subject of the verb ἐξέθετο is not Heraclitus but rather ὁμοῦ πάντα (ibid). Next, the ἴδιος νοῦς should be taken as the "particular idea, common to Heraclitus and Noetus" (p.180). Finally, instead of adding <ὄν> with Marcovich and everyone else, we should correct the grammar by excising μαθητήν (ibid). Thus:

> In this summary all things together have set forth his particular idea, and at the same time I have briefly shown that the particular idea of the heresy of Noetus is not Christ's idea but Heraclitus' (ibid).

This will hardly command assent: will any reader imagine that πάντα ὁμοῦ could be the subject of ἐξέθετο?[31] Plainly the subject of the verb is

[28] Jo 11.25 – but here the word is ἀνάστασις and not ἔγερσις.

[29] In addition, I find it hard to construe φύλακας ἐγέρσει as meaning "guards against an awakening". Dr Osborne offers no parallels.

[30] The latest comment: Hippolytus "copies no less than nineteen different Heraclitean sayings . . . from a chapter (κεφάλαιον, IX.10.8) of a Hellenistic anthology with Stoic comments" (Marcovich, p.39).

[31] The verb occurs 65 times in the *Refutatio*: in no case does it have anything other than a personal subject. We would not be surprised to find e.g. "The Book" or "The Chapter" as subject; but I cannot believe that Greek will allow πάντα ὁμοῦ as a subject for this verb.

Heraclitus – the subject of the preceding καλεῖ and the following λέγει.[32] That is beyond discussion.

It follows that we need the traditional <ὅν>.[33] What, then, of the notorious 'chapter'? There has been much fuss about nothing – for the chapter does not exist. Although the word κεφάλαιον may mean "chapter", it has other senses. In one of these it refers to short sections or excerpts.[34] And that is most probably the sense which it bears in the present text.[35] Then τούτῳ looks forward, and the whole text says:

> In the following passage [i.e. in B67] he has set down all of his own thought[36] – and at the same time that of the sect of Noetus, whom I have briefly shown to be a disciple not of Christ but of Heraclitus.

Everything fits neatly into place.[37]

VI

This has been a robust review. I believe that many of the things Dr Osborne says in her book are false, and that a few of them are perverse. But I also believe that much of the book – which in my curmudgeonly style I have kept mum about – is true, and that much is importantly true. Moreover, even if

[32] Dr Osborne finds difficulties with this λέγει: it "must mean Heraclitus despite the fact that it follows a reference to Noetus" (p.159 n.79). There is no difficulty – the subject of λέγει is the same as the subject of the immediately preceding finite verb. Dr. Osborne goes further: "The passage appears to be an afterthought. . . . It is conceivable that the text is at fault and the passage has been transposed out of its proper context" (ibid). On the contrary: far from being an afterthought, the text represents the sum and summit of Hippolytus' account of Heraclitus; and any transposition would ruin the thing.

[33] Marcovich makes many hundreds of such small supplements: the sole MS of Books IV-X is pocked with minor lacunae.

[34] See Lampe s.v. κεφάλαιον, D.4.c; note too D.4.d, where the word refers to the Biblical bits we call 'verses' (to Lampe's references add Suda, s.v. τίτλος).

[35] Dr Osborne's "summary" is also a possibility. But the reference will still be to *Heraclitus*' summary, i.e. Hippolytus will be saying that B67 is a summary of Heraclitus' views. In its other Hippolytan occurrences (V vii 1; VI xxix 1; IX xiii 6; X ix 3) the word is used in the plural; the κεφάλαια of e.g. the Naassenes are the *main points* of their heresy.

[36] Ὁ ἴδιος νοῦς means "his own view" (cf. V vi 2, ix 7). There is no connexion with οὗτος ὁ νοῦς in Hippolytus' gloss on B67 (*pace* Dr Osborne, p. 180). There νοῦς means "meaning": see LSJ s.v., III; Lampe s.v., II.

[37] Not quite. The aorist, ἐπέδειξα is puzzling: Hippolytus has not yet "briefly shown" the Heracliteanism of Noetus – he turns to do so in IX x 9-12. Perhaps we should read ἐπιδείξω for ἐπέδειξα?

everything in it were false, the book would still be a major achievement. For the new method is the right method. Only one story of a path remains.

I end as I began – and not from politeness. This is the best book on the Presocratics I have read for decades.

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